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Adopt-a School Program Toolkit

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Section 1: Adopt-a-School Program Overview.....5
Program Overview.....4
Program Benefits and Commitments.....5

Section 2: How It Works.....7
Step 1: Submit Your School Application.....8
Step 2: Confirm Your Partner Match.....9
Step 3: Develop a Partnership Plan.....10
Step 4: Maintain a Strong Partnership.....14
Step 5: Share Your Success.....15

Appendix: Tools and Templates16

Section 1: Adopt-a-School Program Overview

- A. Program Overview
- B. Program Benefits and Commitments

Program Overview

The Adopt-a-School Program is a year-long, supported approach to developing partnerships between schools and their network of supporters, specifically business and community organizations. Ultimately, this program is grounded in the belief that all partners can play a pivotal role in accelerating student and school success. From volunteering in our schools, to sponsoring donations to support student needs, having a committed partner can truly impact students’ lives and learning.

Towards that end, we encourage all DCPS schools to join the Adopt-a-School Program and to use this toolkit to guide your experience. This toolkit is intended for DCPS staff and serves as a roadmap for how to successfully work with partners through a year-long collaboration.

Is This Program Right for Your School?

We encourage all DCPS schools to participate in this program! The **goal** of this work is to develop mutually beneficial relationships between schools and partners that ultimately result in enriched experiences for students and the school community. Participating schools will receive support to achieve the following:

1. Launch new community and/or business partnerships with the school
2. Re-align existing partnerships using the Adopt-a-School structure and process
3. Develop partner management best practices that can be applied to all partners over time

How It Works Summary

The program is designed to be led by schools and supported by the School Partnerships Team within the Office of Family and Public Engagement (OFPE). Outlined below are the key steps to the program.

Step 1: Submit a School Application
Schools will submit an Adopt-a-School Program Application which in turn provides the School Partnerships Team with the necessary information to inform partner recruitment and matching.
Step 2: Confirm Your Partner Match
Once schools apply, the school enters the pipeline for receiving a partner. The School Partnerships Team will then work with the school’s identified program point of contact (program POC) to select a partner for the school. <i>(Note—In order for any partnership to be an official Adopt-a-School partnership, the school and partner must both submit program applications and formally agree to partner for a minimum of one school year.)</i>
Step 3: Develop a Partnership Plan
Schools and partners develop a partnership plan that outlines their collaboration for the year. This should include <u>three school level activities</u> and <u>one donation drive</u> . We encourage schools to consider their Comprehensive School Plan and other student-facing goals.
Step 4: Maintain a Strong Partnership
Maintain and strengthen your partnership through the consistent and effective execution of activities and an intentional commitment to develop the relationship.
Step 5: Share Your Success
Share the success of your partnership with the School Partnerships Team via surveys, emails, and social media platforms. We want to ensure your good work is known and celebrated!

Program Benefits and Commitments

Program Benefits

The Adopt-a-School Program is designed to connect community resources with schools. Through this program, schools have access to:

- Resources:** Apply the unique skills and resources of your partner to enhance your student’s experience and strengthen school initiatives.
- Structure:** Rather than one-off events, this program offers a model for building a lasting relationship between schools and organizations.
- Visibility:** The School Partnerships Team will help to promote the great work happening at your school and via this partnership.

Are you a 40/40 School?

In an effort to ensure that all partnership work is aligned with DC Public School’s strategic plan, *A Capital Commitment*, the School Partnerships Team will provide additional support to the targeted “40/40 schools”¹ that participate in this program. Specifically, these schools will be prioritized for partner matching and receive additional supports to launch and maintain the partnership.

Program Commitments

While each partnership will be uniquely tailored to the partner and school, all participating parties are expected to complete the following:

Support 3 School/Partner Engagements and 1 Donation Drive
Work with your partner as they support at least 3 school level activities and 1 donation drive. These engagements are flexible to school needs and can take several forms (see page 11 for ideas).
Develop a Partnership Plan
Develop a year-long plan with your partner that outlines key engagements (events, donations, etc.) during the year. All schools will be asked to submit a copy of this plan to the School Partnerships Team via a quick survey. (Tip-Use our template on page 13 to save time on the survey)
Select 1-2 Program Points of Contact (POCs)
This school point of contact can be any member of staff who is able and willing to be the primary contact with the partner throughout the school year. This person will also serve as the main point of contact with the School Partnerships Team.
Periodic Reporting
Complete a mid-year and end of year survey used to assess your satisfaction with the partnership.

¹ “40/40 Schools” is in reference to Goal 2 of DC Public School Strategic Plan, *A Capital Commitment*, which aims to see the 40 lowest-performing DCPS schools increase proficiency rates by 40 percentage points by 2017.

Time Commitments

To make this program successful, schools should have 1-2 school employees identified as the point of contact for this program throughout the school year. Our goal is to keep this commitment as easy as possible. Below is a general approximation of the time required for this work.

Task	Time Requirement	Recommended Time of Year
Partnership Meeting School and partners meet and co-create a partnerships plan	60-90 mins.	October
Submit Partnership Plan Schools are asked to submit an outline of their 3 engagements and 1 donation event once developed with the partner. Tip—Use the Plan template in this toolkit to save time (page 13)	15 mins.	Approximately 4 weeks from confirming a partner/ By Mid-October
Pre-Activities Planning Coordinating calls and/or emails leading up to the activities outlined in your partnership plan	45mins.-1hr./ activity	Four times throughout the year leading up to events
Hosting 3 activities and 1 donation drive with partner	Varies based on activity	Four times throughout the year
Completing Surveys Program participants will be asked to complete surveys twice annually to share their experience in the program to date	10 mins./ survey	Mid-Year and End of Year

Get Started!

Schools interested in joining the program must complete the [Adopt-a-School Application](#).

The application can also be found here: bit.ly/DCPSadoptaschool_schoolapp.

We encourage all schools to apply!



Section 2: How It Works

- A. Step 1: Submit Your School Application
- B. Step 2: Confirm Your Partner Match
- C. Step 3: Develop a Partnership Plan
- D. Step 4: Maintain a Strong Partnership
- E. Step 5: Share Your Success

Step 1: Submit Your School Application

Now that you have reviewed the Program Overview (Section 1) it is time to apply for the program!

Application Instructions

The application is quick and easy to submit. We ask that the Principal, Assistant Principal, or Dean submit the application in order to confirm that the school leadership supports joining the program. Once you complete the application, you will receive an email from the School Partnerships Team indicating that your application is being processed.

Link to School Application: bit.ly/DCPSadoptaschool_schoolapp

SY 15-16 School Application Deadline*: September 11, 2015

* Although the School Partnerships Team will do our best to support Adopt-a-School requests throughout the year, we cannot guarantee a partner match for applications submitted after the deadline.



Step 2: Confirm Your Partner Match

Determining a Strong School-Partner Match

Schools and partners are asked similar questions to help assess interests, needs, and priorities for the school and partner. The School Partnerships Team suggests matches when resources offered by partners align with the school’s interests. The following factors are taken into consideration:

- ✓ Alignment between partner resources and school needs
- ✓ Existing school/partner relationships
- ✓ Partner’s prior experience working in schools
- ✓ Partner’s preference on student grade level
- ✓ Geographic preference

Steps to Approving Your Partner Match

STEP 1: Notification and Review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a match has been made, schools will be notified first and instructed to review their proposed matches and either accept or decline the potential partner. • After the school approves the match, the School Partnerships Team will contact the partner to propose the school to the partner. • Once both parties agree to the match, it becomes an official Adopt-a-School partnership and both parties will be instructed to connect directly to schedule their planning meeting.
STEP 2: Accept or Decline
<p>Schools are asked to either approve or decline their matches within 5 business days from the time they receive their match notification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Accepts</u> – If a school accepts their proposed match, the School Partnerships Team will contact the partner and move the matching process to the next step. • <u>Declines</u> – If a school declines their proposed match, the School Partnerships Team will follow up for more information and then work to connect the school with an alternate partner if/when a new partner becomes available.
STEP 3: Email Introductions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once schools and partners have approved their match, the School Partnerships Team will send an official email introduction between both partners. • <u>After this point, the school and partner will be responsible for communicating directly with each other.</u> If either party has difficulty with communications, they are encouraged to contact adoptaschool@dc.gov for assistance.

Formalizing Partnerships

For any partnership match to be official in the Adopt-a-School Program, both the school and partner must submit applications and formally confirm the partnership with the School Partnerships Team.

Engaging in the Adopt-a-School Program, and reference to the community organizations which participate in this program, does not constitute endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the District of Columbia Public Schools of the partnership organization, its members/employees, or its message.

Step 3: Develop a Partnership Plan

Once a partnership is established, the next step is to meet in person, align on goals, and set a specific plan for success. Below are recommended steps for developing this Partnership Plan. Keep in mind this planning process is intended to not only align the school and partners around the work, but to also provide time for the school and partner to brainstorm creative ways to serve students! We encourage schools to think creatively across all of your school needs and opportunities, including referencing your Comprehensive School Plan.

Note—Additional tools and templates to support the planning process are at the end of this section.

Preparing for Your First Partner Meeting

Here are a few actions we recommend when preparing for the first partner meeting.

Identify School Goals
<u>Schools should drive the planning for the partnership.</u> Partners may approach schools with specific ideas on how they can support the school. While these ideas are welcomed, it is up to the school to ensure that all plans are first and foremost grounded in student needs.
Brainstorm Possible Activities
A partner can support students and schools in a number of ways. At the end of this section you will find a list of suggested activities to consider hosting with your partner throughout the school year.
Set Introductory Meeting Agenda
A sample agenda for a 60-90 minute meeting is outlined on page 12. Please feel free to modify and/or divide up the content over multiple conversations.

Creating Your Partnership Plan

We recommend reviewing the Partnership Plan Template (page 13) as schools will be asked to submit that information via a web survey approximately a month after formalizing the partnership. The goal is to ultimately have an at least 3 activities and 1 donation drive outlined for the yearlong relationship.

TIP: It's always a best practice to leave each conversation with clear next steps and owners. We recommend asking the partner to follow up with the school by a set date to ensure the work continues!

Submitting Your Partnership Plan

Due within 4 weeks of launching the partnership

We ask that all schools coordinate a meeting and generate a Partnership Plan with their partner within four weeks of confirming the partnership. This will keep the partnership energized and on track!

All schools are asked to submit their completed Partnership Plan to School Partnerships Team **within 4 weeks of confirming the partnership and/or no later than the end of October.** You should submit directly via this [Adopt-a-School Partnership Plan Survey](#).

Suggested Partnership Activities

Focus Area	Sample Activities for Partners
Academic Enrichment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutor students • Sponsor academically centered field trips • Volunteer with reading programs (read aloud days) • Serve as a judge in school fairs, activities, or portfolio presentations
Achievement Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in student awards ceremonies • Sponsor student scholarships
College and Career Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career presentations in classrooms • Job shadowing days • Internships and on the job learning opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Resume editing ○ Job application training ○ Communication/interview skills • College prep support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Personal statement editing ○ College application support ○ Financial aid application assistance
Supporting School Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host school supply drives for students and their families • Organize school clean up days • Sponsor spirit days and school-wide events • Donate incentives for improved student behavior/attendance
Supporting Teachers/Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer to staff school field days • Sponsor staff recognition events • Donate staff recognition awards (restaurant certificates, new materials for teacher lounge, etc.) • Offer space to host professional development meetings for school staff • Offer pro-bono professional support

Sample Partnership Planning Meeting Agenda

SY15-16 ADOPT-A-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PLANNING MEETING

School Y and Partner X

- I. Introductions (10 minutes)**
 - a. School Overview
Share info about the school, student body, and local community
 - b. Partner Overview
Share overview of the organization, previous community involvement, and interest in partnering

- II. Creating a Partnership Plan (45 minutes)**
 - a. Partnership Goals
*School and Partner discuss what they hope to get out of the partnership.
School share specific ideas on how partner can support students and the school goals (consider how the partner can support CSP goals, student attendance, school culture, family engagement etc.)*
 - b. Proposed Partnership Activities
Brainstorm proposed partnership activities and timeframes for when they would occur.
 - c. Complete Partnership Plan
Commit to 3 activities and 1 donation drive and set dates for all four engagements.

- III. Communication Norms (15 minutes)**
 - a. What are the preferred methods of communication for school? For partner?
 - b. How often will we communicate different types of information?
 - c. What is a realistic response time to emails/calls for school? For partner?
 - d. School level point(s) of contact/email: _____
(Reminder—does not always need to be the principal)
 - e. Partner point(s) of contact/email: _____

- IV. On-going Reflection & Growth (10 minutes)**
 - a. How often will we connect to discuss partnership progress?
 - b. Who will be responsible for scheduling these check ins?

- V. Next Step (10 minutes)**
End each meeting knowing who is responsible for the next step
 - a. What logistics must be finalized to get first activity in motion?
 - b. When do we need to connect again to keep the partnership moving forward?
 - c. Who is responsible to ensure this next step happens?

Suggested Materials to Bring

- ✓ Personal calendar (to inform when follow up meetings can take place)
- ✓ School/Company calendar (to inform when activities are planned)
- ✓ Adopt-a-School Toolkit (specifically section 2 to reference recommended activities)

Sample Partnership Plan

We strongly recommend schools use this template as it outlines the exact information that the School Partnerships Team will require schools to share during one of our few touch points throughout the year.

SY15-16 ADOPT-A-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PLAN

School Y and Partner X

School _____

Partner _____

School Based Point of Contact (name and email): _____

Partner Point of Contact (name and email): _____

Engagement #1

Name of event/activity:	<i>College and Career Panel</i>
Description:	<i>Partners visit four 9th grade classrooms during College and Career week and share their experiences with selecting and financing college</i>
Targeted date(s):	<i>Mid February, the week of 2/14</i>
Location:	<i>4 9th grade classes</i>
# students served:	<i>100 students – 25/class</i>
Next step to plan event:	<i>Initial planning call to take place 1st week of January. School to contact partner.</i>

Engagement #2

Name of event/activity:	
Description:	
Targeted date(s):	
Location:	
# students served:	
Next step to plan event:	

Engagement #3

Name of event/activity:	
Description:	
Targeted date(s):	
Location:	
# students served:	
Next step to plan event:	

Donation Drive

Name of event/activity:	<i>Winter Items Donation Drive</i>
Description:	<i>Partner holds holiday drive to collect items needed by students in the winter and drop them off before the holidays</i>
Targeted date(s):	<i>Deliver items by 12/18</i>
Location:	<i>Items collected at partner offices and delivered to school</i>
# students served:	<i>Providing coats for up to 100 students</i>
Next step to plan event:	<i>Initial planning call week of November 15th.</i>

Step 4: Maintain a Strong Partnership

Keep the Partnership on Track

Once you have created the Partnership Plan, we want to ensure the relationship stays strong and on track! Below are tips on how to ensure a successful on-going collaboration.

1. **Schedule check in meetings**—given the demands of any given school day, we recommend putting check in meetings on the calendar as early as possible to keep your plans on track.
2. **Ask for help**—if at any point you need help getting the partnership back on track, please contact the School Partnerships Team at adoptaschool@dc.gov.
3. **Take time to share and receive feedback**—truly successful partnerships are based on trust and shared responsibility. Take time early on to ask for and share feedback with your partner. This will help to set the tone that this is a true team effort.

Ways to Cultivate the Partnership

The most effective partnerships are often those that demonstrate mutual support. Below are a few recommendations on how the school can show appreciation to their partner:

- Send thank you notes from students and/or staff
- Share student art work
- Invite your partner to visit the school for a day
- Invite your partner to major school events and celebrations (Talent shows, sporting events, spelling bees etc.)
- Feature your partner in your school newspaper, blogs, community listservs, etc.
- Tweet pictures and appreciation of your partner



Step 5: Share Your Success

Inform the School Community

As your staff works to provide these partnership opportunities to the school, it is important that you keep your community informed. Suggested strategies include:

- Highlight partnership engagements in school newsletters, community listservs, blogs, etc.
- Post fliers in the school and send messages home
- Inform the school's PTA/PTO and other community groups
- Invite key stakeholders to relevant events
- Promote from school social media accounts

Inform DC Public Schools

Surveys

Throughout the school year you will be prompted to complete brief surveys to gather your feedback and assess your satisfaction with your partnership. These surveys will also be a place to highlight key successes in your partnership and promote any up-coming events. We are committed to providing increased visibility for schools that are maximizing these partnerships. Program members are strongly encouraged to complete these surveys to help the School Partnerships Team better support you. Any additional updates may be sent to adoptaschool@dc.gov so we can celebrate your good work.

Social Media

Social Media is an easy and effective way to let a range of DCPS and city-wide stakeholders know about the great work happening at your school. Commit to always tweet or post your Adopt-a-School activities! Be sure to also notify the School Partnerships Team before the event occurs. In some occasions, we may be able to increase the support for and attention to the event.

- **Twitter**—tweet [@DCPSpartners](https://twitter.com/DCPSpartners) and [@DCPublicSchools](https://twitter.com/DCPublicSchools). There are over 35,000 followers for these two accounts ranging from parents to the Chancellor and more!
- **Instagram**—tag [@DCPublicSchools](https://www.instagram.com/DCPublicSchools) in any Instagram posts
- **Facebook**—tag [@DCPublicSchools](https://www.facebook.com/DCPublicSchools) in your post if using your public school page.

Media and Press

If the school hosts an event or activity that may attract media coverage, please contact the DCPS Press Secretary, michelle.lerner@dc.gov, for guidance and assistance in promoting your event.

Appendix: Tools and Templates

- A. Adopt-a-School Program: Checklist
- B. Partner Recruitment Tips
- C. Sample: Event Planning Checklist
- D. Donation and Volunteer Policies
- E. FAQs for Schools

Adopt-a-School Program: Checklist

Step 1: Submit Your School Application	
	Review program overview and commitments
	Complete the Adopt-a-School: School Application to join program and be matched with a partner
Step 2: Select Your Partner Match	
	Receive and review partner matches from the School Partnerships Team
	Accept/decline partner matches (schools that decline will be re-matched if/when new partners area available)
	Once both parties confirm the match they will be instructed to begin communicating directly
	Reach out to your partner and set up initial partnership planning meeting
Step 3: Develop a Partnership Plan	
	Prepare meeting agenda and send to partner in advance (See template page 12)
	Schools and partners meet in person and co-create a partnership plan
	Schools submit partnership plan to the School Partnerships Team via the Adopt-a-School Partnership Plan Survey within 4 weeks of receiving their match
Step 4: Maintain a Strong Partnership	
	Schedule check-in meetings
	Ask for help as needed
	Take time to share and receive feedback with your partner
	Take steps to cultivate your partnership
Step 5: Share Your Success	
	Inform your school community of activities
	Share updates with the School Partnerships Team via email and social media

Partner Recruitment Tips

Encourage Local Partners to Apply

Although the School Partnerships Team will take the lead on recruiting partners to support schools, we also encourage schools to reach out to potential partners, particularly those in your school community.

In many cases, schools will know which local businesses or community groups are interested in working with their school. We encourage you reach out to your supporters and invite them to join you in this program. Simply instruct the partner to complete the [Adopt-a-School Program: Partner Application](#) or contact adoptaschool@dc.gov to express their interest in working directly with your school.

Potential Partners

Schools should consider partners in and around your school neighborhood including but not limited to the following:

- ✓ Grocery stores
- ✓ Hardware stores
- ✓ Local restaurants
- ✓ Colleges and Universities
- ✓ Hospitals
- ✓ Arts organizations and so much more!

Sample Partner Recruitment Email

We encourage schools to recruit their local partners for this program. Here is a sample email you can use to encourage supporters to apply.

Greetings <PARTNER>,

I am reaching out to invite you to join me and my school, SCHOOL, in a new partnership via the [Adopt-a-School Program](#). As a member of our local community, you have a unique position to not only support the school, but to truly impact our students and families.

I invite you to consider joining this program and partnering directly with our school!

Joining the program means that we agree to work together throughout the school year to do great things for our school community and kids. We'll come up with a handful of "engagements", or ways that your organizations can partner with our school to bolster student success. This can range from volunteering at a family night event, to donating resources to celebrate and encourage student achievement.

We thought this could be a great fit for your organization and certainly hope you'll consider focusing your supports towards this program and our school!

Please visit our website to learn more, or reach out to me directly. You can also contact adoptaschool@dc.gov for more information—just make sure they know you're interested in our particular school! To get started, simply complete a brief [Partner Application](#) (1.usa.gov/1U45nsX) and DCPS will reach out to you with next steps.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sample: Event Planning Checklist

Student Selection and Permission Forms

- How many students will be involved in the activity?
- How old are the students involved in this activity?
- Will permission slips need to be signed?
- Will media release forms be required for this event?
 - If yes, how will the school and partner ensure that only students with submitted forms are captured in footage?

Transportation and Supervision

- What time would you like students to arrive for activity?
 - Remember to build in cushion time for metro delays.
- What transportation is needed, if any, for the event? Who will cover the costs of this transportation?
 - *Be sure to include adult chaperones in final attendance numbers*
- How many chaperones are needed to assist with transporting and supervising students?
- Who will be the primary point of contact for student transportation?
- Who will receive the students when they arrive?

Event Logistics

- What time will your activity begin?
- What time will your activity end?
- Is this activity before or after school?
 - Don't hesitate to push back on events that take away from instructional time
- Is lunch included in your activity?
 - If not, and students need to bring their own, is there space for lunch storage?
- Are there restrooms available for student use? (if applicable)

Pre-event preparations

- How should the students be prepared for this event in order to maximize their learning and engagement?
- How should any non-school staff be prepared for this event in order to maximize the quality of their engagement with students? (*i.e.-do the non-school adults have experience in facilitating Q&A with high school students?*)

Communications

- Have you shared this event with relevant school staff?
- Would your school community like to be notified?
- Given that this event is linked to the Adopt-a-School partnership, have you shared this upcoming activity with the Adopt-a-School Program? (email adoptaschool@dc.gov)

Donation and Volunteering Policies

DCPS Donation

DCPS welcomes the support of donors! As schools receive donations, please keep in mind that all donations (in kind or financial) made to DC Public Schools are legally required to be reviewed and approved by the Mayor’s Office of Partnerships and Grant Services (OPGS).

Note—please use the following guidance for computer donations: <http://dcps.dc.gov/node/937472>

Donation Category	Action Step	Resources
All unsolicited donations valued at less than \$500	Can be submitted directly to the school without prior OPGS approval.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school must have the donor complete the Drop Off Donation Form (found here: http://opgs.dc.gov/node/321362) Once the form has been signed by both the school and donor, the school must scan and email it to marcel.guy@dc.gov or fax to 202-727-1652
All donations valued at more than \$500	An application to approve the donation must be submitted online to OPGS for legal approval before accepting the donation. For more information on how to complete an application online, please go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCaZoe7Ciss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These donations must be submitted to OPGS via a QuickBase application. All School Business Managers should be trained and have access to this QuickBase tool. If your Business Manager is unfamiliar with this portal, s/he must contact marcel.guy@dc.gov and request training and access to this tool for processing donations over \$500. Once the application has been submitted, it will take up to 2 weeks to receive approval. (Remember to start this process early!) For more information on how to process donation, please go to http://opgs.dc.gov/node/228042 For additional assistance, please contact dcps.partnerships@dc.gov

Volunteer Policies

Volunteers who work directly with students on a regular basis or have the potential to be alone with a student are required to complete the DCPS volunteer clearance process.

- Volunteers must have a confirmed placement in a DC public school before going through this process. DCPS does NOT conduct background checks for volunteers at charter schools, private schools or non-DCPS sites.
- For more information visit <http://dcps.dc.gov/page/volunteer-our-schools> or call 202-442-5447.

FAQs for Schools

1. What is the Adopt-a-School Program?

It is a new DCPS initiative focused on fostering year-long partnerships between community groups, businesses and DCPS schools. This program is designed to facilitate and foster school-partner relationships that are uniquely tailored to support both the school's and partner's shared priorities. Schools and partners will receive guidance, tools, and support from the DCPS School Partnerships team to conduct a range of activities at the school.

2. What is expected of schools that join the Adopt-a-School Program?

The goal of this program is to create a yearlong partnership between schools and business/community organizations. All participating partners and schools are expected to work together to:

- Produce a year-long partnership plan which outlines shared goals and priorities
- Support at least 3 school-level engagements throughout the year (*i.e.*- *family nights, career fair etc.*)
- Coordinate at least 1 donation effort for the school

3. How does the Adopt-a-School Program benefit schools?

This program will help schools:

- Launch new corporate and/or community partnerships with the school
- Focus existing partnerships towards school goals via the Adopt-a-School structure and process
- Develop partner management best practices that can be applied to all partners over time

It also provides schools with access to best practice resources for managing partners, structure to ensure partnerships are resulting in beneficial outcomes, and visibility around the great work and leadership happening at your school.

4. What type of support can schools expect from the Adopt-a-School Program?

- **Partner Matching:** The School Partnerships team will work with schools to create matches that are aligned with the expressed goals and priorities of schools.
- **Planning Guidance:** The School Partnerships team will provide detailed templates and tools to guide schools through the planning and launching of their partnerships.
- **Trainings:** Schools will be given the opportunity to attend training and support sessions that will highlight best practices and provide guidance around partnership management

5. How much time/capacity will it take from school staff to participate in the Adopt-a-School Program?

This program requires that the school has at least one school employee identified the point of contact for this program for the school year. Our goal is to keep this commitment as easy as possible. Below is a general approximation of the time required for this program.

Task	Time Requirement	Recommended Time of Year
Partnership Meeting School and partners meet and create a partnership plan	60-90 mins.	October
Submit Partnership Plan Schools are asked to submit an outline for their 3 engagements and 1 donation event once developed with the partner. Tip – Use the “Partnership Plan” template found on page 13.	15 mins.	Approximately 4 weeks from confirming a partner/by mid-October
Pre-Activities Planning Coordinating calls and/or emails leading up to the activities outlined in your partnership plan	45mins.-1hr./ activity	Four times throughout the year leading up to events
Host 3 activities and 1 donation drive with partner	Varies based on activity	Four times throughout the year
Completing Surveys Participants will be asked to complete surveys twice annually to share their experience	10 mins./ survey	Mid-Year and End of Year

6. Why are schools required to apply to the Adopt-a-School Program?

This allows the School Partnerships Team to effectively match partners with DCPS schools based on shared needs, interests, and priorities. Through the application, we are able to learn about any existing relationships and the school’s priorities. Additionally, given that this program is a year-long initiative, it is important that schools are able to review the program requirements and identify a clear program Point of Contact to lead this partnership work for the year.

7. How are schools matched with partners?

All schools must complete an [Adopt-a-School Program: School Application](#) in order to participate. The School Partnerships Team will then use that application to inform which partner is selected for the school’s match. In order for all matches to be official, both the school and partner must complete an application, and both parties must approve the partnership. The School Partnerships Team will not formalize any relationship until applications and approvals are received.

8. Is the school responsible for / permitted to recruit their own partners?

Participating schools are not required to recruit partners, but are encouraged to do so! In particular, the School Partnerships Team’s recruitment efforts will generally focus on larger, city-wide or national organizations. That said, all of our communities have valuable local businesses and groups that would be a great value-add to your school’s community. We encourage you to reach out to your local supporters and invite them to join the Adopt-a-School Program by completing the [Adopt-a-School Program: Partner Application](#) or email adoptaschool@dc.gov.

9. What types of organizations are encouraged to join the Adopt-a-School Program?

Any organization, group or business that is interested in more than a one-time touch point with a school is encouraged to apply. The Adopt-a-School Program is designed to be flexible to both the partner’s and the school’s priorities. All supporters—from local community groups to large businesses—are critical to our schools’ success. We encourage you to complete an [Adopt-a-School Program: Partner Application](#) and/or contact adoptaschool@dc.gov to learn more.